

Pesticide Contamination Prevention Act

Summary of Verified Detections Reported July 1996 to June 1997

Compound Detected [Number of Wells with Verified Detections]	Counties Where Detected	Highest verified concentration (ppb) [allowable level, ppb]
ACET (2-amino-4-chloro-6-ethylamino-s-triazine) [37 wells]	Fresno, San Joaquin*, Stanislaus, Tulare	1.4 [none set]
atrazine [7 wells]	Butte, Fresno, San Joaquin	2.8 [3]
bromacil [28 wells]	Butte, Fresno, Tulare	3.2 [91]
deethyl-atrazine [40 wells]	Fresno, San Joaquin*, Tulare	3.2 [none set]
diaminochlorotriazine† (DACT) [27 wells]	Fresno*, Tulare*	0.93 [none set]
diuron [50 wells]	Fresno, Madera, San Joaquin*, Stanislaus, Tulare	1.5 [14]
hexazinone [3 wells]	San Joaquin*, Stanislaus*	0.27 [230]
norflurazon† [9 wells]	Fresno*, Tulare*	0.79 [none set]
prometon [1 well]	Fresno	0.27 [none set]
simazine [74 wells]	Fresno, Madera*, Mendocino*, San Joaquin*, Tulare	0.93 [4]
TPA [3 wells]	Madera*	0.89 [3500]

* First time verified detection of this chemical in this county.

† These are the first verified detections of DACT and norflurazon in California.

Process:

When pesticides are registered for agricultural or outdoor institutional uses, and they are detected in ground water, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) investigates to determine if the source of the residue is the result of routine agricultural use (application to crops, for example), or a "point source" of pollution (such as a pesticide spill into a well). In its investigations, the Department first attempts to verify the detection by analyzing new samples from the positive wells. DPR scientists also test nearby wells to determine the extent of any contamination.

After the Department verifies the detection, its investigation focuses on whether the pesticide reached ground water because of routine agricultural use. If a pesticide is only registered for nonagricultural uses, or no longer registered, the detection is referred to the State Water Resources Control Board for further investigation. Point sources of pollution are also referred to the Water Board for further action.

If it is determined that routine agricultural use is the source, the Department may establish a pesticide management zone (PMZ) around the location of the detection. A PMZ is a geographic surveying unit of approximately one square mile in size, designating the area as sensitive to ground water pollution. Once a PMZ is established, DPR imposes special restrictions designed to prevent further contamination. Actions in the past have included revocation of permits to use pesticides, modification of use practices, or suspension of a chemical's registration in California.